



UDC 371.3

DOI 10.35433/pedagogy.1(120).2025.10

IMPACT OF MARTIAL LAW ON THE LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: ANALYSIS OF CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATION MECHANISMS

S. M. Sytniakivska*

The article analyses the challenges faced by the academic community under martial law and identifies adaptation mechanisms that help support the professional activity and psychological stability of teachers. In the current conditions of war, the educational sector has undergone significant changes that have affected the organisation of the educational process, the emotional state of teachers and the overall productivity of their work. In particular, teachers of higher education institutions have found themselves in a situation of constant stress due to the danger, the requirement to quickly master new technologies, the need to adapt to distance learning and the aggravation of socio-economic problems.

The study is based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory, which allows assessing the level of professional burnout by three main components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduction of personal achievements. A survey of 211 university teachers revealed that 45% of respondents have a high level of emotional exhaustion, 30% face depersonalisation, and 40% experience a decrease in confidence in their own professional abilities. The analysis also showed that women teachers are more likely to experience emotional fatigue, while men are more likely to demonstrate a tendency to professional cynicism.

The article discusses the main adaptation mechanisms that teachers use to overcome stress and professional burnout. These include peer support, development of digital competencies, and the use of stress management techniques such as meditation, exercise, and relaxation practices. At the same time, the authors emphasise that even effective adaptation strategies have limited impact if the crisis situation lasts for a long time.

Particular attention is paid to the development of support programmes for teachers in crisis. A number of measures have been proposed, including the creation of a psychologically safe environment, the organisation of stress management trainings, the introduction of mutual assistance programmes among colleagues, as well as material and technical support. The proposed recommendations are aimed at reducing the level of professional burnout, increasing psychological stability and efficiency of teaching activities.

The study is of practical value for educational institutions, university administrations and government agencies responsible for supporting teachers. The authors emphasise the need to implement a systematic approach to supporting teachers, especially in crisis situations. Further research could include an analysis of the regional peculiarities of the impact of martial law on teacher

*Doctor of Sciences (Pedagogy), Full Professor
(Polissia National University)
hng@ukr.net
ORCID: 0000-0003-1367-0487

burnout, as well as a study of the long-term dynamics of adaptation and the effectiveness of the proposed support programmes.

Keywords: martial law, professional burnout, higher education institution, distance learning, adaptation, psychological resilience, support program.

ВПЛИВ ВОЄННОГО СТАНУ НА РІВЕНЬ ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО ВИГОРАННЯ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ ЗВО: АНАЛІЗ ВИКЛИКІВ ТА АДАПТАЦІЙНИХ МЕХАНІЗМІВ

С. М. Ситняківська

Стаття присвячена аналізу викликів, з якими стикається академічна спільнота в умовах воєнного стану, та виявленню адаптаційних механізмів, які сприяють підтримці професійної діяльності та психологічної стійкості викладачів. У сучасних умовах війни освітня сфера зазнала значних змін, що вплинули на організацію навчального процесу, емоційний стан педагогів і загальну продуктивність їхньої роботи. Зокрема, викладачі закладів вищої освіти опинилися в ситуації постійного стресу через небезпеку, вимоги до швидкого опанування нових технологій, необхідність адаптації до дистанційного навчання та загострення соціально-економічних проблем.

Дослідження базується на використанні методики Maslach Burnout Inventory, яка дозволяє оцінити рівень професійного вигорання за трьома основними компонентами: емоційна виснаженість, деперсоналізація та редукція особистих досягнень. Анкетування 211 викладачів вітчизняних закладів вищої освіти виявило, що 45% респондентів мають високий рівень емоційного виснаження, 30% стикаються з деперсоналізацією, а 40% відчують зниження впевненості у власних професійних здібностях. Аналіз також показав, що жінки-викладачі частіше стикаються з емоційною втомою, тоді як чоловіки частіше демонструють схильність до професійного цинізму.

У статті розглянуто основні адаптаційні механізми, які викладачі використовують для подолання стресу та професійного вигорання. Серед них – підтримка колег, розвиток цифрових компетенцій, використання технік стрес-менеджменту, таких як медитація, фізичні вправи та релаксаційні практики. Водночас, автори наголошують, що навіть ефективні адаптаційні стратегії мають обмежений вплив, якщо кризова ситуація триває довгостроково.

Особливу увагу приділено розробці програм підтримки викладачів у кризових умовах. Запропоновано низку заходів, які включають створення психологічно безпечного середовища, організацію тренінгів зі стрес-менеджменту, впровадження програм взаємодопомоги серед колег, а також матеріальну та технічну підтримку. Запропоновані рекомендації спрямовані на зниження рівня професійного вигорання, підвищення психологічної стійкості та ефективності викладацької діяльності.

Дослідження має практичну цінність для освітніх установ, адміністрацій ЗВО та державних органів, відповідальних за підтримку викладачів. Автори підкреслюють необхідність впровадження системного підходу до підтримки педагогів, особливо у кризових ситуаціях. Подальші дослідження можуть включати аналіз регіональних особливостей впливу воєнного стану на професійне вигорання викладачів, а також вивчення довгострокової динаміки адаптації та ефективності запропонованих програм підтримки.

Ключові слова: військовий стан, професійне вигорання, заклад вищої освіти, дистанційне навчання, адаптація, психологічна стійкість, програма підтримки.

Introduction of the issue. In the context of current global challenges, including military conflicts, the educational sector faces a number of significant challenges. Teachers of higher education institutions (HEIs) are forced not only to ensure the continuity of the educational process, but also to adapt to

new conditions that affect both their professional development and emotional state. The martial law caused by the threat to the country's security leads to dramatic changes in the work of higher education institutions: distance learning, the need to quickly master digital technologies, mobility and security

requirements, as well as emotional pressure due to the instability of the situation.

One of the most common consequences of these challenges is the professional burnout of teachers. Professional burnout is a syndrome that results from chronic stress in the workplace that has not been successfully overcome [1]. It is characterised by three main symptoms: a feeling of exhaustion or fatigue; increased mental distance from work or work-related cynicism; and decreased professional effectiveness.

Constant stress, uncertainty and increasing workloads increase the risk of emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation and effectiveness. However, in response to these difficulties, teachers develop and apply adaptive mechanisms that help them maintain their own performance and psychological resilience.

The study of the impact of martial law on the level of professional burnout of university teachers is relevant and important, as it allows identifying the main challenges faced by the academic community and contributes to the development of effective strategies to support teachers in crisis conditions. This topic involves analysing both the negative aspects of the impact of martial law and the potential resources that help teachers adapt to the new reality.

Current state of the issue. Currently, the topic of the impact of martial law on the level of professional burnout of teachers is to some extent covered in scientific research in various fields, including education, psychology, sociology, and others.

First of all, we should pay attention to the study of the dynamics of professional burnout of Ukrainian teachers during the war in the article "Burnout dynamics among Ukrainian academic staff during the war" by researchers from Berdiansk State Pedagogical University Natalia Tsybuliak, Yana Sychikova, Anastasia Popova, Serhii Kovachov, Olha Hurenko and Liudmyla Shevchenko. This article was published in *Scientific Reports Nature*, one of the world's most respected scientific journals. The cross-sectional

study, which was divided into two waves in July 2022 and January 2023, used the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services (one of the most common tools for assessing the level of professional burnout in social, educational and healthcare workers), which identified three main components of burnout:

Emotional exhaustion is a feeling of overwork and lack of energy to perform work tasks.

Depersonalisation is "professional cynicism", a sense of alienation and indifference to colleagues, and devaluation of their work.

Reduction of personal achievements - doubts about one's own abilities and feelings. The employee feels unfulfilled and believes that his or her work does not matter.

The study found a significant impact of the war on the level and extent of professional burnout among Ukrainian teachers. The most vulnerable to the negative effects were female teachers, who experienced increased emotional fatigue and alienation from their professional activities throughout the war. At the same time, the results of the study show that the duration of hostilities has a stronger impact on the emotional exhaustion of male teachers. In addition, it was found that the duration of a full-scale war has a significant impact on the dynamics of depersonalisation [2].

It is also worth noting the work of Natalia Tsybuliak, PhD in Psychology, Associate Professor of the Department of Applied Psychology and Speech Therapy at Berdiansk State Pedagogical University, and Yana Sychikova, PhD in Engineering, Vice-Rector for Research, who in their article "On the Brink: Migration and Burnout of Ukrainian University Teachers during the War" described the factors that influence the burnout of teachers in Ukrainian higher education institutions during the war.

The deterioration of the security situation has become a key factor in teachers' professional burnout. About 84-87% of respondents felt anxious about their lives, loved ones and the future of the country. The instability of social

protection, insufficient remuneration and economic instability also exacerbated burnout: 55% of teachers abroad and 49% of internal migrants complained about the negative impact of economic conditions.

External migrants faced additional financial difficulties due to high costs abroad, while internal migrants had to adapt to new conditions and suffered from a lack of resources. Almost 50% of them reported uncertainty about their professional future, and 35% lacked the resources to work effectively.

Teachers who were forced to migrate showed higher levels of emotional exhaustion than non-migrants. Internal migrants faced a loss of access to teaching resources and difficulties in re-establishing professional networks. External migrants experienced social isolation, cultural barriers, and loss of professional identity due to the inability to work in their usual format. Anxiety about students, the university and the country, even while abroad, caused emotional pressure and interfered with professional self-realisation [3].

And according to a study by Go Global and Gradus Research, 54% of Ukrainian teachers experience professional burnout, and 70% observe it in their colleagues. More than half of educators (54%) admit that they need psychological help. The workload of teachers has increased significantly: 80% of respondents say their work has become more difficult due to blended learning, air raids and power outages. Only 3% reported a decrease in workload. In offline learning, 85% of teachers face the inability to conduct full lessons due to constant anxiety and technical difficulties, and in online learning, 71% complain about the lack of stable internet.

Among the urgent needs of teachers, psychological and methodological support is a top priority to help them cope with stress and adapt to new working conditions. Material and technical support to ensure comfortable learning conditions, including heating, water supply and necessary equipment, also remains important. Teachers also note

the need for knowledge about working in emergency situations (46%), stress management (37%), identifying signs of stress (29%) and conflict resolution (18%). These results were presented at the press conference "Educational Front. The Impact of War on Educators" [4].

An important aspect is the methods of minimising this problem. At the moment, there are few programmes to support teachers in Ukraine, but some of them are worth noting. The programme "Psychological Support for School Teachers": Implemented by the State Education Quality Service of Ukraine, the programme provides psychosocial and emotional support to teachers, especially in times of war. The programme consists of three blocks: psychological support and safety, pedagogical support and conflict prevention [5]. The exchange programme for Ukrainian teachers "Bridge USA: UAEP/UPRR": A programme that facilitates the exchange of experience between Ukrainian and American teachers for the purpose of joint research, exchange of pedagogical experience and development of training courses [6]. Model teacher training programmes: Approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, these programmes are aimed at raising the professional level of teachers and managers of general secondary education institutions implementing the State Standard of Basic Secondary Education [7].

Aim of the research is to analyse the impact of martial law on the level of professional burnout of higher education institutions (HEIs) teachers, to identify the key challenges faced by the academic community and to identify adaptation mechanisms that help maintain the psychological stability and performance of teachers in crisis conditions.

Research methods: analysis, synthesis, quantitative methods (descriptive statistics), empirical methods (questionnaires, surveys).

Results and discussion. The results of the questionnaire and survey of 211 university teachers were used to generate the results that highlight the level of professional burnout. First of all, it is

worth noting the results of the questionnaire conducted among university teachers using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) [8], which

revealed that most respondents have a medium or high level of emotional exhaustion (Figure 1).

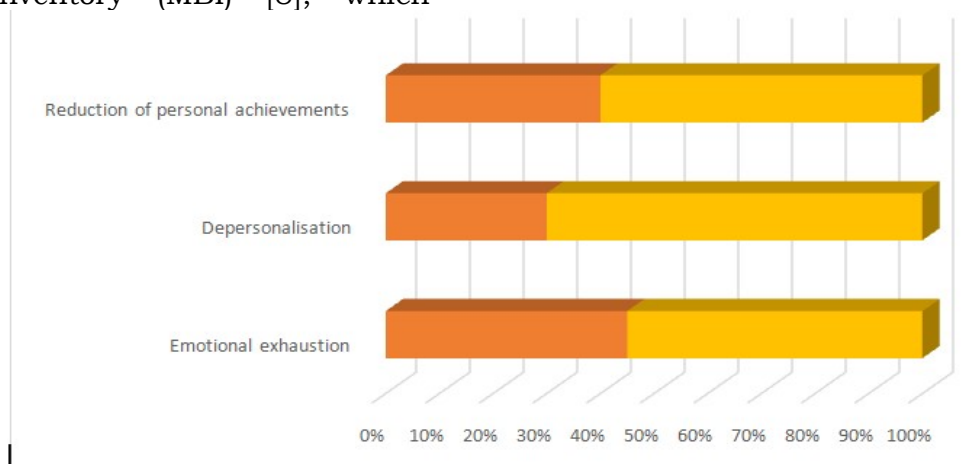


Fig. 1. The level of emotional exhaustion

45% of respondents showed a high level of emotional exhaustion, which indicates a loss of energy and difficulties in performing professional duties. 30% of respondents showed a tendency to professional cynicism (depersonalisation), which was expressed in alienation and indifference to colleagues and students. 40% of teachers felt a decrease in confidence in their professional abilities,

which indicates a reduction in personal achievements.

It is worth noting the influence of gender on professional burnout, as the analysis showed gender differences in the perception of stressful conditions. Female teachers reported emotional exhaustion more often (53%), while the figure for men was 37% (Figure 2).

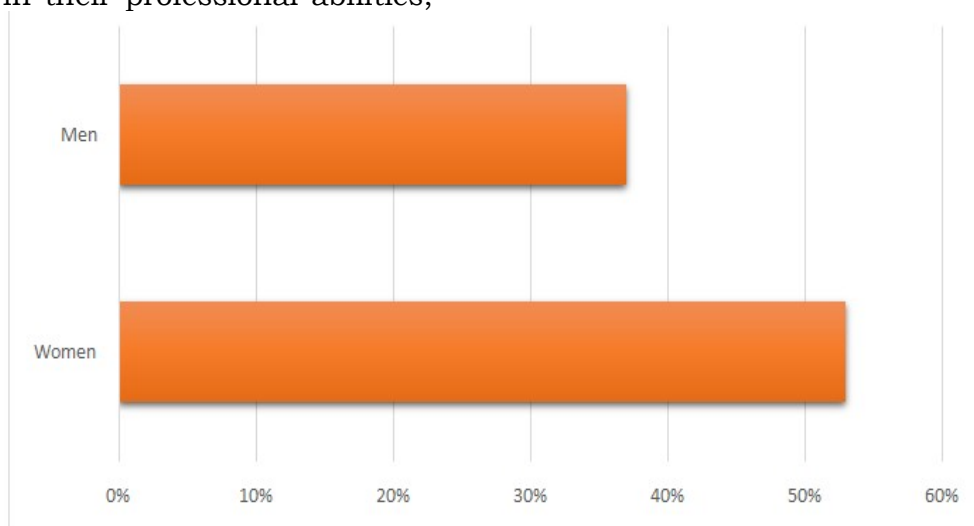


Fig. 2. The influence of gender on professional burnout

Men showed a higher tendency to depersonalise (35% vs. 25% for women),

which may indicate a difference in adaptation strategies (Figure 3.).

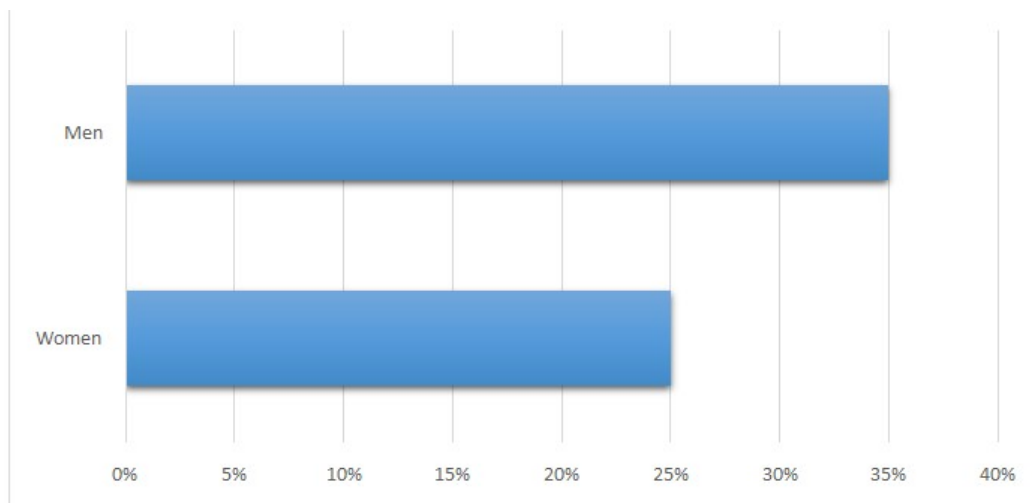


Fig. 3. Men's difference in adaptation strategies

To study the adaptation mechanisms of teachers, a questionnaire was created with questions about the work environment, digital skills, emotional support, stress management, and

personal development. The survey revealed several key strategies for adapting to work under martial law (Figure 4.).

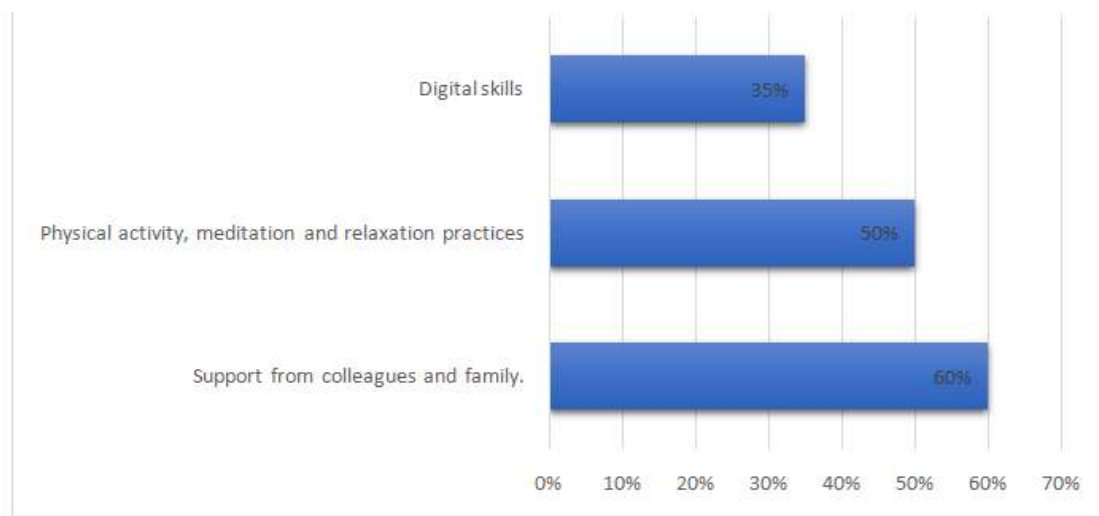


Fig. 4. Work environment, digital skills, emotional support, stress management, personal development

60% of teachers said that the main resource is the support of colleagues and family. 50% use various stress management techniques, including physical activity, meditation and relaxation practices. 35% of respondents improved their digital skills, which allowed them to adapt to the remote work format.

The results of the study confirm that martial law has significantly affected the level of professional burnout of university teachers, increasing emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Women were particularly vulnerable due to their greater emotional sensitivity. At the same time, men demonstrate a higher tendency to professional cynicism, which

may be a reaction to prolonged stressful conditions. Adaptation mechanisms, such as peer support, development of digital competencies and stress management techniques, are important resources for overcoming burnout. However, their impact is limited if the crisis situation is ongoing.

The findings of this study are useful for the development of support programmes for teachers aimed at preventing burnout and increasing their psychological resilience.

Therefore, a *recommended support programme* was created to promote the psychological resilience of higher education teachers through the use of internal resources of the institution, including the professional experience of staff, existing infrastructure and organisational capabilities.

Programme objectives:

Creating conditions for emotional recovery and preventing professional burnout.

Development of stress management and emotional regulation skills.

Increasing team cohesion and developing mutual support.

Use of existing HEI resources for education, training and informal events.

The stages of the programme include assessing the needs of the team (conducting surveys or short questionnaires among teachers to identify the main challenges and needs, forming a working group of representatives of the administration, psychologists and initiating teachers); creating conditions for psychological support, for example: a psychological relief room: allocation of a room with a comfortable interior for teachers to relax during the working day, an internal support line: involvement of teachers-psychologists for individual consultations; training

Another important aspect is to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the programme by surveying teachers to assess their emotional state and satisfaction with working conditions and adjusting programme activities based on the data obtained.

Expected results include: reduced emotional exhaustion and professional burnout, increased team cohesion and mutual trust, improved overall atmosphere in the institution and increased teaching effectiveness, development of new support practices that can be integrated into the institution's workflow on a regular basis.

Conclusions and research perspectives. The study has shown that the professional burnout of higher education teachers is a significant problem in the context of martial law caused by chronic stress, increased professional workload, adaptation requirements and emotional exhaustion. It has been found that the most vulnerable to burnout are teachers who face constant changes in the work environment, such as the transition to blended or distance learning, interruptions in the educational process due to air raids, and insufficient technical support.

Despite the challenges, teachers are demonstrating the ability to adapt by applying a variety of mechanisms, such as psychological support from colleagues, improved digital skills and stress management techniques. However, these efforts require systemic support at the state level, including financial, methodological and technical assistance.

Further research in this area should cover a wider contingent of teachers, in particular from different regions of Ukraine, which will allow to identify regional peculiarities of professional burnout and its factors. It is also important to conduct longitudinal studies that will allow us to trace the dynamics of changes in the condition of teachers over time. Attention should be paid to the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of psychological, technical and material support programmes for teachers in crisis. Such programmes may include training in stress management techniques, development of digital competences, as well as individual and group consultations with specialists.

In addition, it is promising to study the impact of adaptation mechanisms on

various aspects of teachers' professional activities, such as productivity, job satisfaction and motivation. This will help to create a holistic support system that

will help to improve the quality of education under martial law and during the period of the country's recovery.

REFERENCES (TRANSLATED & TRANSLITERATED)

1. Ministerstvo Okhorony Zdorovia Ukrainy. *Profesiine vyhorannia – yavnyshche, a ne khvoroba: Shcho naspravdi zatverdily v MKKh-11 (4 chervnia 2019 roku)* [Professional burnout is a phenomenon, not a disease: What was actually approved in ICD-11 (4 June 2019)]. Retrieved from: https://moz.gov.ua/uk/profesijne-vigorannja---javyshe-a-ne-hvoroba-scho-naspravdi-zatverdili-v-mkh-11?utm_source=chatgpt.com [in Ukrainian].
2. Tsybuliak, N., Suchikova, Y., Shevchenko, L. et al. *Burnout dynamic among Ukrainian academic staff during the war*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-45229-6> [in English].
3. Koniuchenko, A. (2024). *Eksperty nazvaly chynnyky, yaki vplyvaiut na vyhorannia vykladachiv ZVO (22 veresnia 2024 roku)* [Experts named factors that influence the burnout of university teachers (22 September 2024)]. Retrieved from: https://zn.ua/ukr/EDUCATION/eksperti-nazvali-chinniki-jaki-vplivajut-na-vihorannja-vikladachiv-zvo.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com [in Ukrainian].
4. Nova Ukrainska Shkola. *Ponad polovyna opytanykh uchyteliv vidchuvaie profesiine vyhorannia: rezultaty doslidzhennia (27 sichnia 2023 roku)* [More than half of the surveyed teachers experience professional burnout: results of the study (27 January 2023)]. Retrieved from: https://nus.org.ua/news/ponad-polovyna-opytanyh-uchyteliv-vidchuvaye-profesijne-vygorannia-rezultaty-doslidzhennia/?utm_source=chatgpt.com [in Ukrainian].
5. Derzhavna sluzhba yakosti osvity; Psykholohichna pidtrymka vchyteliv shkil u formati onlain-navchannia (11 kvitnia 2022 roku) [Psychological support for school teachers in the format of online learning (11 April 2022)]. Retrieved from: https://sqe.gov.ua/psikhologichna-pidtrimka-vchiteliv-shki/?utm_source=chatgpt.com [in Ukrainian].
6. Visit Ukraine. *Prohrama obminu dlia ukrainskykh vykladachiv "BridgeUSA: UAEP/UPRR": yak doluchytysia? (10 sichnia 2025 roku)*. [Visit Ukraine. Exchange programme for Ukrainian teachers "BridgeUSA: UAEP/UPRR": how to join? (10 January 2025)]. Retrieved from: <https://visitukraine.today/uk/blog/5454/exchange-programme-for-ukrainian-teachers-bridgeusa-uafpuprr-how-to-join#vikladaci-yakix-naukovix-galuzei-mozut-doluchytysia-do-programi> [in Ukrainian].
7. Ministerstvo Osvity i Nauky Ukrainy. *Zatverdzheno typovi prohramy pidvyshchennia kvalifikatsii vchyteliv ta kerivnykiv ZZSO, yaki vprovadzhuiut Derzhavnyi standart bazovoi serednoi osvity (14 zhovtnia 2022 roku)* [Approved model in-service training programmes for teachers and heads of GSEIs implementing the State Standard of Basic Secondary Education (14 October 2022)]. Retrieved from: https://mon.gov.ua/news/zatverdzheno-tipovi-programi-pidvishchennia-kvalifikatsii-vchiteliv-ta-kerivnykiv-zzso-yaki-vprovadzhuyut-derzhavnyi-standart-bazovoi-serednoi-osviti?utm_source=chatgpt.com [in Ukrainian].
8. Maslach, C., Jackson, S.E., & Leiter, M.P. (2018). *Maslach Burnout Inventory, Manual 4th Edition*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mindgarden.com/maslach-burnout-inventory-mbi/685-mbi-manual.html> [in English].

Received: January 30, 2025
Accepted: February 19, 2025